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(54) Abstract Title
Thumb protector

(57) The thumb protector 2 which may be made up as a thumb portion of a conventional glove, has pads 6 and 8, preferably provided on the underside and side of the protectors 2. They prevent hardened pads and/or blisters on the side and distal ends of the thumbs of operators from the continuous use of hand held controllers of games systems. The protector 2 may be made of leather, plastic, rubber or fabric, to which the pads, which may be made of rubber and/or plastic, may be attached or moulded. A constrictive band may be used at the entrance 18 of the protector 2 to keep the protector on the thumb and may also incorporate a window (14, Fig 2) on the top of the protector. The protectors will be made up in pairs to suit the size of a wearer's thumbs.

Underside Plan View

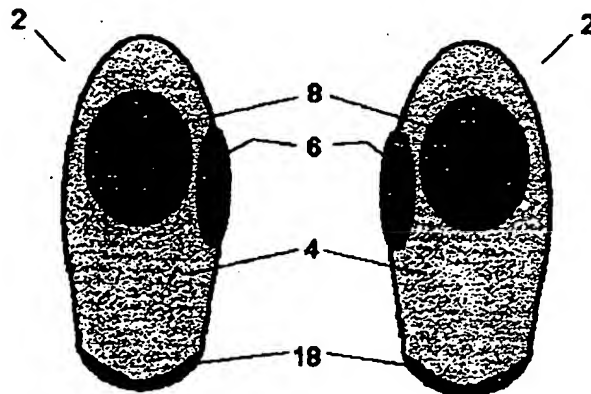


Figure 1

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SHEET 1 / 2
Underside Plan View

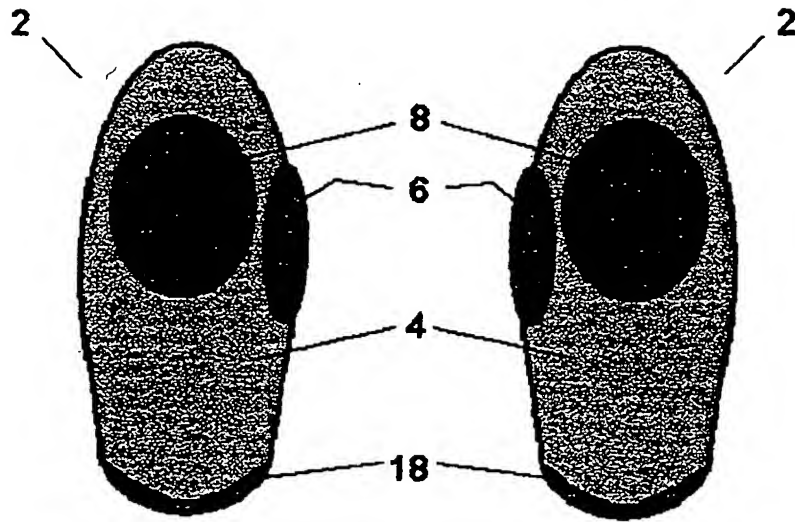


Figure 1

SHEET 2 / 2
Upper Plan View

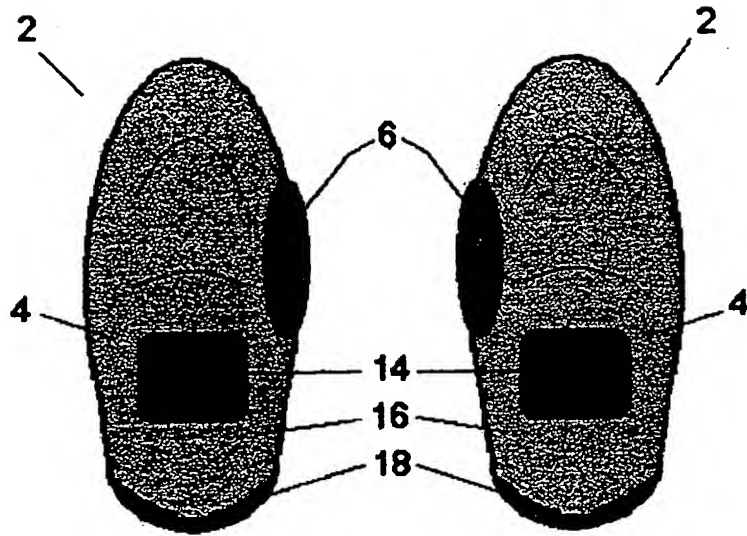


Figure 2

THUMB PROTECTOR

This invention is concerned with improvements in or relating to a thumb protector and is particular, though not exclusively, concerned with improvements in a thumb protector adapted for use by those playing computer games by operation of a hand-held controller.

An established effect that occurs when people play or use a gaming system operated by hand-held controllers, are blisters on the sides and distal ends of the operators thumbs.

This occurs due to the continuous depressing of the various buttons of the hand-held controller, which activity causes the thumbs to be starved of blood whereupon hardened pads and/or blisters form on the thumbs as aforesaid.

It is an objective of the present invention to eliminate these unwanted side effects of operating a game system controller.

Preferably, the pads are provided on an underside and a side portion, in use, of the protector.

Conveniently, the protector may be made from a durable material, which allows, in use, unrestricted movement of a wearer's thumb joints.

Preferably, the protector may be made from a tough fabric, leather, plastic, rubber or, plastic and rubber.

The protector may also comprise a constrictive band at an entrance of the protector to facilitate, in use, the retention of the protector on the thumb of the wearer.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the pads may be attached to the protector or they may be moulded therewith depending upon the material from which the protector is made.

The pads may conveniently be of rubber, plastic or rubber and plastic or any suitable material exhibiting the characteristics of those materials.

There now follows by way of example, a detailed description of the invention, which description is to be read with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows an underside plan view of a pair of thumb protectors; and
Figure 2 shows an upper plan view of the protectors shown in Figure 1.

The present invention provides a thumb protector 2, there being two such protectors of opposite hand to provide a pair thereof, see Figure 1 and 2, each of the thumb protectors being essentially the same and, therefore, they are accorded like reference characters in the drawings.

The protector 2 is made up as a thumb portion 4 of a conventional glove and is made from tough fabric, leather, moulded rubber and/or plastic or any other suitable material of acceptable durability in use, but which material allows unrestricted movement of a wearer's thumb joints.

Each thumb portion 4 is provided with pads 6 and 8 on a side portion 10 and an underside portion 12 thereof respectively, see Figure 1.

The pads 6 and 8 are moulded from a suitable rubber or rubber like material and may be moulded onto or in situ with the thumb protector 2.

In addition, each thumb portion 4 incorporates a window 14 on an upper portion 16 thereof, see Figure 2.

In use it will be appreciated that when operating a hand held gaming controller, an operative will fit one protector 2 on each thumb whereby the disadvantages highlighted hitherto will be dramatically reduced if not completely eradicated.

This is because the pads 6 and 8 afford protection to the sensitive portions of the wearer's thumbs and reduce the impact at the point of contact between a wearer's thumb and control buttons of a games console or a computer hand-held controller.

Obviously, the thumb protectors 2 will be made up in pairs to suit the size of a wearer's thumbs.

Also, in order to facilitate a close fit of the protectors 2 on a wearer's thumbs, the portions 4 may be provided with a constrictive band, not shown, at an entrance 18 thereof.

It will be appreciated that the protectors 2 may be made in any colours and may usefully be of a brand colour of a gaming manufacturer or they may be made in the colours of a sports team or the colours and theme of a particular game.

Other modifications are possible within the scope of the invention.

Claims

1. A thumb protector provided with pads, which pads reduce the impact on a wearer's thumb, when the protector is in use, at a point of contact between a wearer's thumb and the control buttons of a games console or a computer hand-held controller.
2. A thumb protector according to claim 1 wherein the pads are provided on underside and side portions, in use, of the protector.
3. A thumb protector according to either of Claims 1 and 2 wherein the protector is made from a durable material, which allows, in use, unrestricted movement of the thumb joints of a wearer.
4. A thumb protector according to any one of Claims 1 to 3 wherein the protector is made from tough fabric.
5. A thumb protector according to any one of Claims 1 to 3 wherein the protector is made from leather.
6. A thumb protector according to any one of Claims 1 to 3 wherein the protector is made from moulded plastic and/or rubber.
7. A thumb protector according to any one of Claims 1 to 6 wherein the protector comprises a constrictive band at an entrance of the protector to facilitate, in use, the retention of the protector on the thumb of a wearer.
8. A thumb protector according to any one of the preceding Claims wherein the pads are moulded from plastic.

Claims cont....

9. A thumb protector according to any one of Claims 1 to 7 wherein the pads are moulded from rubber.
10. A thumb protector according to any one of Claims 1 to 7 wherein pads are moulded from rubber and plastic.
11. A thumb protector according to any one of the preceding Claims wherein the pads are moulded directly onto or moulded with the protector.
12. A thumb protector substantially as described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Application No: GB 0031585.3
 Claims searched: 1-12

Examiner: Sally Vaughan
 Date of search: 17 January 2002

Patents Act 1977 Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.T): A3V

Int Cl (Ed.7): A41D 13/05, 13/08, 19/00; A61F 13/10

Other: Online: WPI, EPODOC, JAPIO

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage		Relevant to claims
Y	US 5761743	(ANDREWS et al.) see whole document e.g. column 4 lines 36 - 41	4
X, Y	US 5640713	(PING) see whole document e.g. Fig 3, column 1 lines 8 - 11, lines 47 - 53, column 2 lines 4 - 13 and lines 26 - 34	X: 1, 2 & 8 - 11 Y: 4, 5
Y	US 4944437	(CALVERT) see whole document e.g. Fig 1 and column 1 line 66 - column 2 line 6	5
X, Y	US 4127222	(ADAMS) see whole document e.g. Fig 7, column 2 lines 8 - 16, column 3 lines 12 - 15, 18 - 20 and column 4 lines 17 - 22	X: 1 - 3, 6, 8 - 9 & 11 Y: 4, 5
X, Y	US 3728736	(PUGH) see whole document e.g. Figs 8 & 10, column 2 lines 12 - 19, column 3 lines 3 - 4 and lines 21 - 29	X: 1 - 4 & 6 Y: 4, 5
X, Y	US 3511242	(AGNONE) see whole document e.g. Fig 1, column 2 lines 4 - 6 and lines 24 - 38	X: 1 - 3, 6 - 9 & 11 Y: 4, 5
A	US 2725570	(PENNA) see whole document e.g. Fig 4 & 5 and column 1 lines 25 - 29	

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step
 Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.

& Member of the same patent family

A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
 P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
 E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

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Application No: GB 0031585.3
Claims searched: 1-12

Examiner: Sally Vaughan
Date of search: 17 January 2002

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X, Y	US 2717799 (JONES) see whole document e.g. Fig 5, column 1 lines 21 - 38, lines 58 - 59, column 2 lines 12 - 14 and lines 24 - 26	X: 1 - 3, 6 - 8 & 11 Y: 4, 5

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

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